

The most 'European' Europeans?

The politically invisible 17 million mobile citizens

Conference Summary



Background

- HEC Paris (Chair Jean Monnet), European Alternatives and Groupes d'études géopolitiques (GEG), in partnership with the Europe's Futures Program of IWM Vienna are convening an international interdisciplinary conference in Paris
- The title of the conference is *The most 'European' Europeans? the politically invisible 17 million EU citizens.*
- The scientific conference will address for the first time an emerging yet overlooked phenomenon: there are 17 million EU citizens who live in another EU member state. While they are not a self-aware, established community, they epitomise a growing, unnoticed Europeanisation of our societies.

- The conference will take place in Paris. A workshop will be held during the day on HEC Campus combined with an opening, keynote conference at the École normale supérieure (tbc).
- Date of the conference: 2nd April 2020
- submission deadline 31st January 2020.
- The scientific direction of the Conference is assured by Prof. Alberto Alemanno and Niccolo Milanese, the organising committee is composed by Carlo De Nuzzo and Gilles Gressani. More will join.
- For any questions please contact 17millionconference@gmail.com.
- A selection of the papers will be published, in both French and English, on a special issue of [le Grand Continent](#) and potentially in an edited volume.

Conference summary

There are at least 17 million EU citizens who live today in another EU member state, including the 3.7 million living in the UK. In the last decade they have doubled in number and today represent 4% of the EU working-age population. They epitomise a growing, yet unnoticed Europeanisation of our societies, further accelerated by job precarity and the fallout of the 2008 Financial Crisis. In addition, at least 2 million citizens commute daily across borders, and hundreds of thousands of seasonal workers move across the continent to take up low-wage jobs. Together, there are 20 million EU citizens spread across the continent.

This geographical dispersal, engendered by decades of free movement and open borders, renders their count imperfect. Many of them don't see the need to register when changing residence and often live in an administrative limbo between countries. The collective imagination portrays them as a European elite, the happy few who, perhaps having benefited from the Erasmus study programme, criss-cross the continent in search of self-improvement. A look at the actual data reveals a clearer picture. On average, the mobile EU citizens find it easier to get a job in another EU country than in their country of origin, regardless of their skills. This likelihood is even greater in the case of female workers. People who stopped school after primary and people who went on to university are both significant groups amongst mobile EU citizens. Europeans are moving for work, study, love, curiosity and more reasons.

To sum up, they are much more diverse than they're generally portrayed as being. While they are not yet a self-aware, established community, they contribute a huge amount, economically, socially and culturally, to the regions where they live as well as to those they come from. Yet, they are deprived of the right to political representation in their new country of residence, with one exception: they can vote in local elections. This reveals a bitter truth. Those citizens whose lives are arguably the most "European" are the least politically represented. At a time when the European Parliament is more fragmented than ever, the policies of the European Union are increasingly contested in national public debates, but where each country is becoming more Europeanised in myriad ways, investigating the lack of political voice of those citizens who move between countries and contexts is a way of understanding the current predicament of European democracy and its possible evolutions.

Understanding the predicament of the community of 17 million mobile Europeans, and a comparison of this group with the more settled European population as well as a mobile non-European population, are important starting points for reflection and a re-discussion of the

realities of Europe and its citizens: this conference aims to set out a research agenda on this theme and bring together a community of scholars and practitioners for future work.

Essential readings

- Alberto Alemanno, “17 millions”, *Le Grand Continent*, 30 May 2019. [Link](#)
- Alberto Alemanno, “There are 17 millions mobile EU citizens. We deserve a political voice”, *The Guardian*, 1 May 2019. [Link](#)
- Elizabeth Collett, *The integration needs of mobile EU citizens: Impediments and opportunities*. Brussels: Migration Policy Institute Europe, 2013 [Link](#)
- Stefan Lehne, *The Emergence of European Political Space* [Link](#)
- Lorenzo Marsili and Niccolò Milanese, *Citizens of Nowhere, How Europe can be saved from itself*, Londo: Zed, 2018 [Link](#)
- *The Europeanisation of Everyday Life: Cross-Border Practices and Transnational Identities among EU and Third-Country Citizens (acronym: EUCROSS)*. [Link](#)
- Eurostat data: [Link](#)

Terms of participation

Potential topics include but are not limited to the following:

- Socio-economic data and/or cultural features of the 17 million citizens, their networks, communities, culture(s), resources, supporters, actions and practices.
- Conceptualisation of the mobility of the 17 millions.
- Political rights of the 17 million at local, national and EU level, with a special emphasis on their voting behaviour at the EU elections.
- Social rights of the 17 million at local, national and EU level.
- 17 million in the public sphere with a particular focus on collective, transnational acts of European citizens reported in the media.

- Socio-economic, political, legal and institutional framework of European citizenship in order to better understand cross-national variations in regard to European citizenship at the individual, organizational and public levels.
- Analysis of the relationship between the status of European Citizenship and the status of third country national, including comparisons between the differential treatments of these groups in law, in society, in the media and in politics.
- Analysis of EU participatory instruments – open to both EU and non-EU nationals –, how they are used by the 17 millions and their contribution to the Union’s democratic life.

Abstracts should be submitted to 17millionconference@gmail.com, subject line, “17 million EU citizens” by 31st January

Abstracts should be 250 words maximum in length. They should be titled and have all requisite bibliographic citations. Along with the abstract, please include a detailed, recent curriculum vitae/resume (no longer than 3 pages). Please include your last name in the title of every document you submit.

Abstracts will be evaluated according to the following categories: originality of theme, clear data and methodology, clarity, and relevance of the proposal to the conference theme. The authors of the most promising abstracts will be invited to present their work to the conference.

Submission and publication deadline 1st March 2020.